

REMARKS

Claims 1-6, 10-17, and 21-26 are currently pending in the subject application, and are presently under consideration. Claims 1-22 are rejected. Claim 17 has been amended. Claims 7-9 and 18-20 have been cancelled. New claims 23-26 have been added. Favorable reconsideration of the application is requested in view of the amendments and comments herein.

I. Rejection of Claims 1-22 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,609,198 to Wood, et al. ("Wood") in view of WIPO Patent Application No. 00/04673 to Binding, et al. ("Binding") and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,134,593 to Alexander, et al. ("Alexander"). Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested for at least the following reasons.

Claims 1 and 12 recite that an automated registration arrangement provides a new user with an individual signature certificate having a level of trust commensurate with that of the pedigree certificate and that the automated registration arrangement flags the new user's individual signature certificate with the level of trust of the pedigree certificate in an appropriate storage area. The Office Action asserts that Wood teaches this element by stating that "a session token (an individual signature certificate) is issued to the user that is commensurate with presented credentials" (Office Action dated July 21, 2004, and Office Action dated March 7, 2005; citing Wood, col. 3, ll. 42-53). It is respectfully submitted that, in the response to the Office Action dated July 21, 2004, Representative for Applicant disagreed with the Examiner's assertion and supplied arguments in support of the disagreement. The Response to Arguments section (page 5) of the Office Action dated March 7, 2005, however, makes no mention of these arguments for the patentability of claims 1 and 12, and thus fails to provide a valid response to the arguments. Instead, the same grounds for rejection have been maintained. Representative for Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's assertion regarding the rejection of claims 1 and 12, as described in the Office Action dated July 21, 2004, and as reiterated in the remarks below.

A signature certificate, as known in the art of Public Key Infrastructure (PKI), is a mechanism for reliably conveying the identity of a key pair's owner to the end user (Specification, page 2, ll. 8-9). The PKI establishes that the user owns a key pair by using the digital certificate, which contains information identifying the owner of the key pair, the public key, and the period of time of validity (Specification, page 2, ll. 16-21). The signature certificate is thus not used to authenticate a user to a given security level.

Wood teaches the authentication of an entity to a first authentication level and associating a unique session identifier with the entity (col. 3, ll. 46-48). The entity would thereafter be allowed access to a second authentication level using the unique session identifier (col. 3, ll. 51-53). The unique session identifier, as taught by Wood, is therefore merely a password or authentication scheme, and is not a signature certificate. Accordingly, Wood does not teach an automated registration arrangement that provides a new user with an individual signature certificate having a level of trust commensurate with that of the pedigree certificate, as recited in claims 1 and 12.

Neither the addition of Binding nor the addition of Alexander cures the aforementioned deficiencies of Wood to teach or suggest claims 1 and 12. Binding teaches a method of, establishing a trustworthiness level of a participant in a communication connection between communication partners by equipping a handheld phone with a trustworthiness certificate (Abstract). Alexander teaches a method for a user to automatically order and pay for vendor software via an automated telephony and/or Internet system (Abstract). However, neither Binding nor Alexander, individually or in any combination with Wood, teach or suggest that an automated registration arrangement provides a new user with an individual signature certificate having a level of trust commensurate with that of the pedigree certificate and that the automated registration arrangement flags the new user's individual signature certificate with the level of trust of the pedigree certificate in an appropriate storage area, as recited in claims 1 and 12. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 12, as well as claims 2-6 and 10-11 which depend from claim 1 and claims 13-17 and 21-22 which depend from claim 12, respectively, is respectfully requested.

For the reasons described above, claims 1-6, 10-17, 21, and 22 should be patentable over the cited art. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

II. New Claims

New claims 23-26 have been added. Favorable consideration of new claims 23-26 is respectfully requested in view of the comments below.

New claim 23 depends from claim 1 and recites signing a certificate request by the provided piece of hardware using a private key associated with the predetermined pedigree certificate to provide the new user with the individual signature certificate. None of the cited art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests new claim 23. Allowance of new claim 23 is respectfully requested.

New claim 24 depends from new claim 23 and recites validating that the certificate request was signed by the provided piece of hardware by verifying that the private key is associated with the predetermined pedigree certificate contained within the provided piece of hardware. None of the cited art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests new claim 24. Allowance of new claim 24 is respectfully requested.

New claim 25 depends from claim 12 and recites that the piece of hardware further comprises a private key associated with the predetermined pedigree certificate, the private key being operative to sign a certificate request to provide the new user with the individual signature certificate. None of the cited art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests new claim 25. Allowance of new claim 25 is respectfully requested.

New claim 26 depends from new claim 25 and recites that the certificate request is validated by a certification authority by verifying that the private key is associated with the predetermined pedigree certificate contained within the provided piece of hardware. None of the cited art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests new claim 26. Allowance of new claim 26 is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application and that the application be passed to issue.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,

Date 6/1/05


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